

These Surprises Come With Rules

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Category: H2O: Just Add Water

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: Rikki C., Zane B.

Status: Completed

Published: 2012-02-21 02:42:55

Updated: 2012-02-21 02:42:55

Packaged: 2016-04-26 12:17:59

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 738

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Zane spoils and Rikki disciplines. But it's time that that's changed. Note: prompted by islandofhopex.

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"Zane!" Rikki cries as he hands their daughter another cherry Popsicle.

He rolls those brown eyes she never learned to resist. "Come on, Rikki. She's hungry. It's just one Popsicle."

"Actually, that makes three today," she argues and takes the Popsicle from her daughter's soft, pale hands. "Why don't you have a sandwich or some carrots if you're really hungry?" Rikki suggests, though she thinking she should suggest that to Zane, among other things.

Emily pouts those small red lips of hers and she crosses her arms across her chest. "No."

Rikki's eyes widen a little in shock that her daughter would disobey her. She shoots Zane a glare over her shoulder before turning to face Emily again. "You will eat a sandwich, a fruit, a vegetable, or nothing at all."

Rikki can see the gears turning in her daughter's little head of hers. Should she disobey and risk getting in trouble for the possibility of another sweet, cold treat, or should she give into her mother's rules?

"Can I have a peanut butter and banana sandwich? Please?" Emily asks. Her hazel eyes shine in the sunlight that comes through the kitchen window, and the sudden breeze pushes strands of her hair back behind her. There's no doubt she's as beautiful as her mother.

"Yes, you can." Rikki gives Emily's bicep a quick squeeze, happy to

know that her daughter still obtains her knowledge for respect. Turning on her heel, she addresses Zane: "Make her a sandwich."

He does as he's told and snags a few slices of banana in between swipes of the butter knife that put the smooth peanut butter on the bread. "Here you are," he announces when he's finished.

Their daughter takes the sandwich from her father's outstretched hand, yells out a "thanks" from over her shoulder, and takes off through the back door, back to where her mates are.

Rikki leans against the counter and lets her head fall back against the hollow wooden cabinet. With her eyes now closed, her shoulders slump in relaxation. She's grateful for the cool touch of the counter on the lower part of her back, on a scorching hot day like this.

"You look tired." Zane points out the obvious from somewhere off to her right.

"Well, seeing as I have to do all the disciplining around here, I do think that would require some energy." The palm of her hand presses down on her eye lids and she rubs them tiredly. "Our children will not be brats like everyone else's kids"especially not like that stupid brat that bit me at the party last week."

Zane sighs. "I know, I know." He pauses, standing in front of her, just inches away from touching her. "Rikki, we only have one child."

Rikki opens her eyes and gestures to her stomach. "Surprise."

Disbelief takes over Zane's face, but is quickly replaced with joy. "Oh my God, Rikki, that's great!" He picks her up off her feet and squeezes her tightly around the waist.

"Yeah, yeah," she waves off his comment when he sets her back down, but even she's smiling.

Knowing Zane"and already having had a child with him once before"Rikki probably should have expected his next suggestion. "Let's celebrate!"

Alas, she had not predicted this idea of his. "Oh, no. No, no, no. I am in desperate need of sleep. Hey, we should celebrate that way!" she exclaims with a nod, hoping he'll break down easily this time.

Of course not. This is Zane, after all. "This is our second child we're talking about here! He or she deserves a part just like Emily did." A look of excitement gleams in his eyes and Rikki can practically see the images of the party running through his mind.

She throws her hands up in surrender. "Fine. But" she points a finger at him "Nate is not playing at the party."

"Of course not," he agrees. "He didn't play at Emily's."

She continues on as if he never spoke at all. "And you have to do all of this by yourself, because it was your ideaâ€"that includes clean up."

"Rikki!"

She gives her husband a quick peck on the cheek and makes her way back towards the stairs to her bedroom. "Surprise!"

End
file.